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HURRICANE "CAMILLE"

An Appreciation of the Damage As Interpreted from Aerial Photography

by

Resource Evaluation Division
National Resource Analysis Center
Office of Emergency Preparedness

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August 29, 1969

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FOREWORD

As the media reports became available describing the extent of the devastion along Mississippi coastal areas and initial uncertainties as to details and specifics, it was almost a "reflex" to make inquiries as to:

(a) existence and availability of aerial coverage of the area involved, and (b) requirements placed by OEP or other Federal agencies for such coverage. As an indication of similar concern, several inquiries had been received by the author during this period from Federal and private sources as to the need for and the existence of coverage.

Our first formal inquiries starting August 25 were discouraging, indicating uncertainty as to availability and requirements for same. Fortunately, these initial reports were unfounded. Further information revealed that indeed the Corps of Engineers had requested area coverage of the U.S. Air Force, presumably for area surveys, engineering works applications, rehabilitation, and relief purposes. By August 26, it had been determined that a complete set of the coverage was in Washington at the U.S. Topographic Command. Also, that NASA, Houston had utilized its Earth Resources Aircraft to flying over the area with a variety of sensor equipment (color, color infra red, and black and white photography). Steps were taken to gain access to the Corps of Engineers coverage as well as the NASA imagery. By Wednesday morning, August 27, a complete set of duplicate positive film (20 cans) had been delivered to the USGS facility at Reston, Virginia for use by those Federal agencies with needs so to use it. Similar arrangements were made to acquire copies of the NASA film. Arrangements were then made to view the material at Reston. By close of business August 27, a selection of the photo exposures for annotation and enlargement, and an initial interpretation of major damaged areas had been accomplished.

The principal purpose in presenting this study, preliminary as it is, is to demonstrate a quick reaction capability that is available to those Federal, State and local agencies with the need for it. As these agencies are suddently confronted with disaster management problems of great magnitude, one of their earliest requirements is for definitive information. The aerial photographic medium is a source of information which is capable of providing much of this needed information and in a fairly rapid time sense.

- 2 -

In this spirit the following illustrated report was undertaken. It does not attempt to present a detailed analysis of area or local damage effects. Several areas were chosen for analysis and illustration. Much more damage than described was visible in the photography and therefore reportable. For example, the residential areas in Gulfport and Pass Christian selected for annotation, represent large and very obvious areas of contiguous damage. Adjoining areas along the water front and further inland had suffered almost equally from the severity of flood waters and wind. More detailed interpretation would develop these areas as well.

Photographic Notes:

USAF coverage: Mission Camille, August 21, 1969, scale: approx. 1:27,000.

NASA coverage: (Not yet available at this writing.) Flown August 19, 20, 1969; several missions; high and low altitudes; coverage with black and white, color, infra red, black and white infra red.

- "3 -

Gulfport, Mississippi

Exhibit A

Gulfport Harbor Area

Exhibit A-1

Note: 1. (3) beached ships - 450 ft - 490 ft length

- 2. Breakwater and yacht basin breached dolphins and piers; absence of small boats.
- 3. Damage and destruction of buildings on wharves and piers.
 Roughly 15-20 warehouses and other buildings damaged or destroyed.

Residential Area

Exhibit A-2

Beach front residential area 1-2 miles in length with almost complete destruction of housing.

U. S. Naval Reservation

Exhibits A-3, A-4

- 6 large warehouse buildings (550' x 110') almost totally damaged
- 4 warehouses (230' x 90') destroyed
- 17 warehouses (185' x 40') severely damaged

- i -

Pass Christian, Mississippi

Exhibit B

From the photographs, it would appear that this small town along the gulf-front was almost completely washed out. Dwellings have been washed away or from foundations and deposited considerable distances away; barges are observed 1-2 miles inland, etc.

Residential Section

Exhibit B-1

An area of major destruction. Of more than 200 buildings previously standing, about 1/2 appear to have been destroyed.

Highway Bridge

Exhibit B-2

Highway Bridge about 2 miles north of Pass Christian crossing Bayou Portage, was partially damaged. One span is out and damage is visible on another.

Remarks

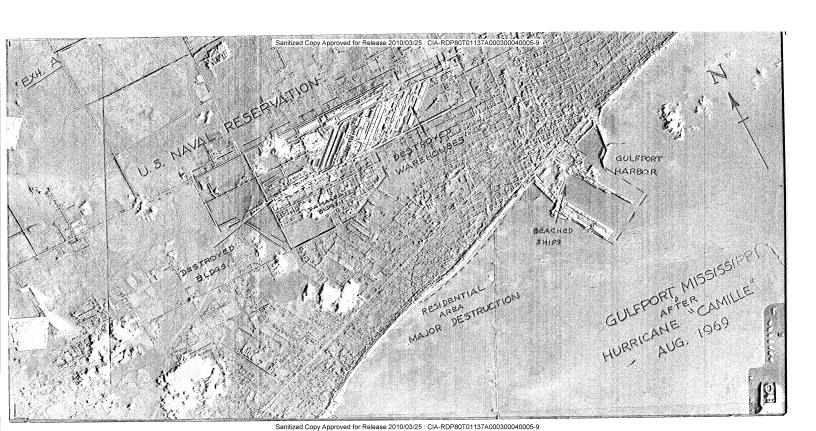
The foregoing interpretation report is very cursory. As noted in the foreword, it attempts to demonstrate graphically the wealth of information in the aerial photographic imagery that is available to disaster managers, and to indicate the relative facility and rapidity with which data can be developed.

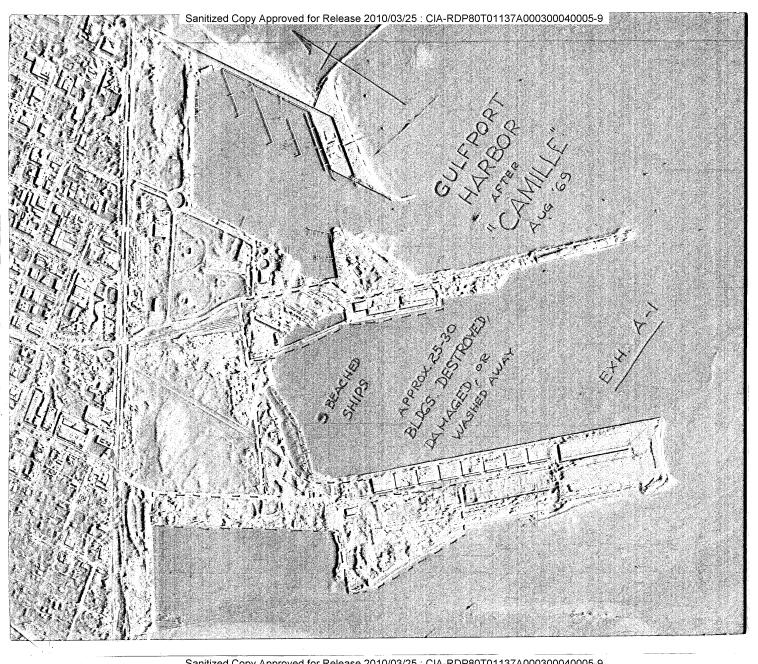
The extraction of information presents little or no problem save that required to assemble photographic interpreters and to put them to work analyzing the photography. Upon receipt of disaster coverage of an area of this magnitude, an information report could be ready for dissemination within an hour or two. Follow-up detailed reports, somewhat longer. Photographic interpretation skills are readily available within the Federal establishment in the Washington area. They are available to a lesser extent at State and local levels within regional and other offices of USDA, USGS, Corps of Engineers and others. It becomes a matter of delineating the work needed and getting it underway.

Perhaps the two most pointed observations to be made from this study are:

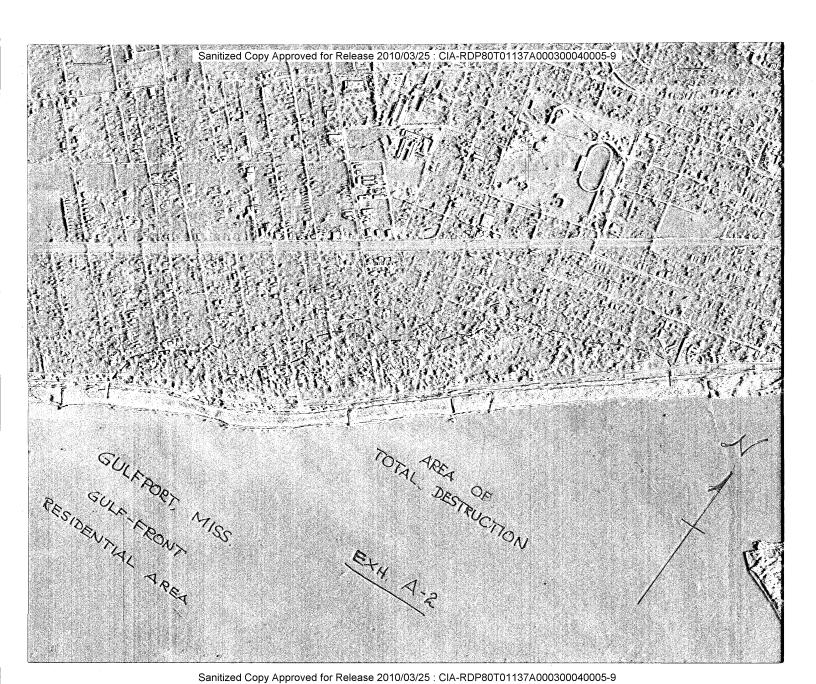
- 1. The almost uniform interest, cooperation and support in making the fullest use of aerial photographic and other sensor imagery under the disaster conditions created by Camille.
- 2. The apparent lack of a visible and coordinated effort to develop uniform requirements for disaster aerial surveys; to report on the availability of same; and the generation of a common requirement for the information contained therein.

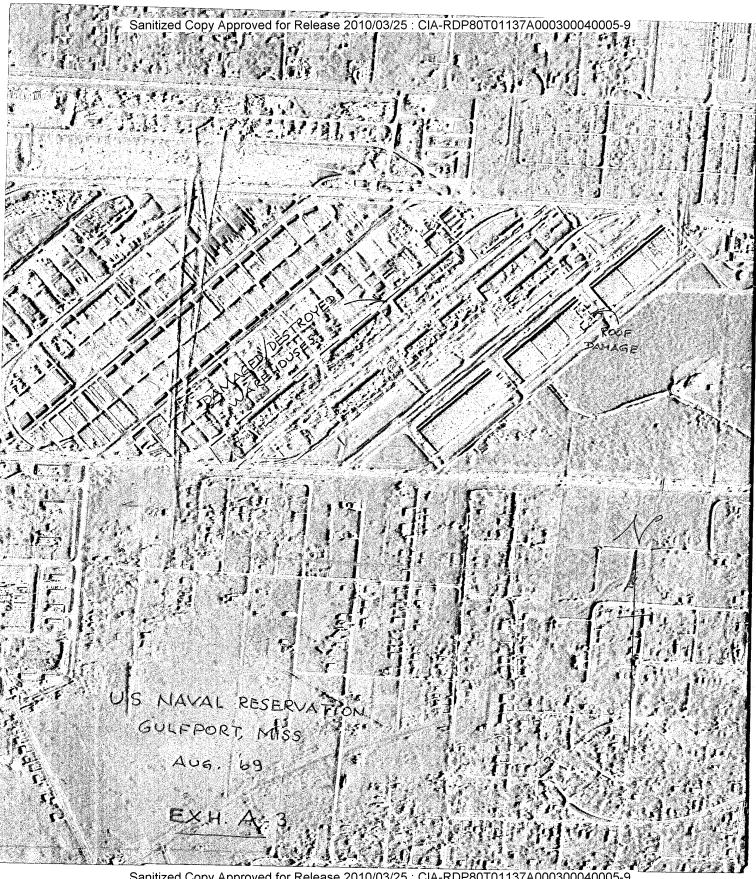
It is noteworthy that elements of the Federal establishment accustomed to utilize photographic survey information are currently discussing the establishment of formal procedures for future use in this connection. It is the opinion of the author that OEP should provide the coordination element.





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